

GIORDANO BRUNO

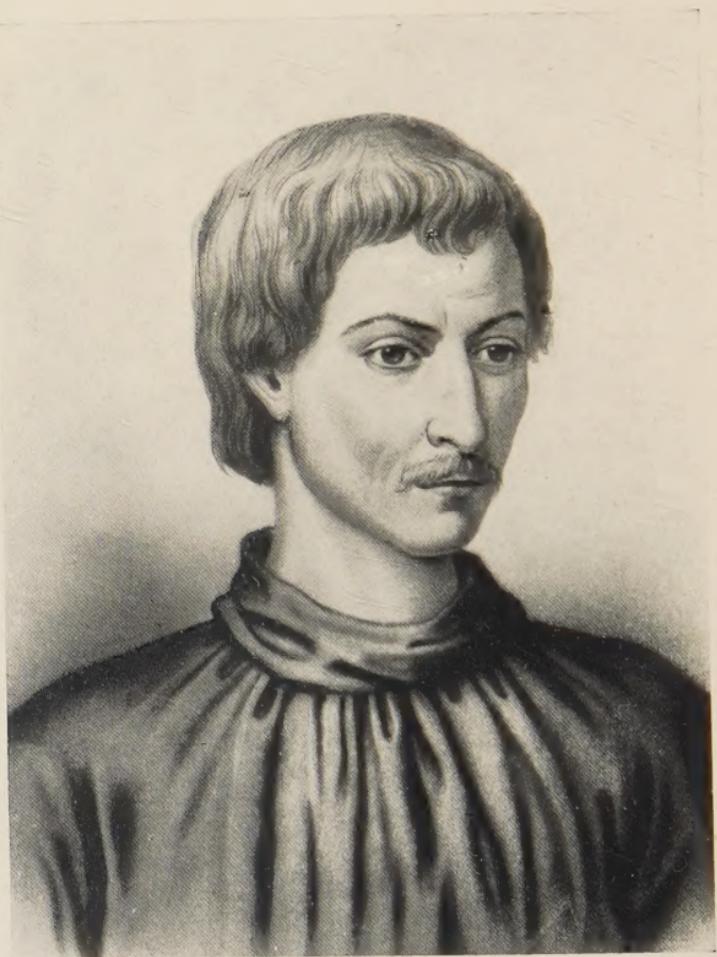


By COULSON TURNBULL



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GIORDANO BRUNO

LIFE AND TEACHINGS
OF
GIORDANO BRUNO

PHILOSOPHER, MARTYR, MYSTIC

1548-1600

BY
COULSON TURNBULL

1913
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GIORDANO BRUNO

Frontispiece

BRUNO'S MONUMENT IN ROME

Facing page 60

FOREWORD

EARNEST souls love to pay homage to the memory of those heroes to whom we owe our religious liberty and freedom. Few such heroes has our fair planet presented us,—a Socrates, a Bruno, a Savonarola.

Bruno's career seemed fraught with keen disappointment and much suffering. Born of heroic mental mould, in cloistered cell he gained deep knowledge and spiritual understanding. This he hurled into a sleeping cruel age, steeped in the gross superstition of a selfish priesthood.

He lived and died the apostle of the ever new and ever old religion, that of spiritual insight. Throughout his writings, the student will readily see his love of the Good is identified with the highest kind of speculative philosophy. Whenever he inculcates the law and order of the Universe, he gives us at the same time resplendent glimpses of the Nature and destiny of the Soul of Man.

We marvel at his genius, his earnestness and devotion to those mighty truths which graced his life and destiny. Well can we forgive him those acrid denunciations and keen sarcasms which aroused the minds of that twilight day.

And we must also throw the veil of forgiveness on those benighted souls who kindled the fires under the tortured and emaciated body of the heroic Bruno.

Yes! The errors of the Past must be forgiven, for He who overshadows us, accepts alike the errors and virtues of the children of men; the former He purifies in His *Æonic* fires of Love, and the latter “he mixes with the sweet influences of the Pleiades that they may be born again among the children of men.”

Bruno, the “Italian of Italians,” during his exile longed for his beloved sunny land. His return cost him his captivity, and then death. His captivity gave us greater freedom, his death gave us larger life.

And so we render homage to this noble

spirit, and believe that while the curling flames enveloped his quivering mortal frame, the Angel of the Word welcomed his immortal Soul. And the welcome!

What hidden Soul-Secret of thy Past, noble Brother, brought to thee so harsh a destiny? Can we of unresponsive minds answer?

In this work I have brought together the best writings still existing of Bruno, and have consulted particularly Berti's excellent work on Giordano Bruno. I am indebted also to the able translation of L. Williams, who gave to the English-speaking public "The Heroic Enthusiasts." I have also to thank my dear wife, who has assisted very largely in the translation of two German works: Alois Riehl's "Giordano Bruno," and Dr. Hermann Brunnhofer's "Translation of Bruno's World Aspect and Destiny." And for the frontispiece I have to thank the publishers of *The Open Court*, Chicago. The other photos I picked up while travelling in Europe. The book I have briefly writ-

ten, and while giving the best of Bruno we have had to regret many times the fact that much has been lost. The whole of this message is but a tribute to the noble memory of a noble martyr.

Coulson Turnbull.

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA,
April 14, 1913.

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS IN THE CAMPANIA

“Ordinary things and easy, are for common and ordinary folk; men rare, heroic, and divine pass along by means of this road of Difficulty until at last Necessity herself is constrained to grant to them the palm of Immortality.”—G. BRUNO.

GIORDANO BRUNO, the philosopher, poet, and martyr, swept the intellectual heavens of Europe like a brilliant meteor, in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He has been aptly named “the wandering knight of a philosopher.”

In that most fertile country of the Campania, called sometimes “The Fortunate,” rests the city of Nola, a short distance from Naples and Mt. Vesuvius.

It is renowned for its resistance to Hannibal after the terrible slaughter of Cannæ. Nola was also the birthplace of Octavius Cæsar and Marcus Agrippa. It

has furnished museums and cabinets with many archaic vases and coins, showing its illustrious past.

To-day it is but a small provincial city, but in ancient times it was renowned for its culture and refinement. It was founded by the Chalcidian Greeks, and was adorned, in the Emperors' time, by turrets and walls and with palaces of the noble families of Rome. Its inhabitants were conspicuous for their courteous manners, their valor, keenness of perception and love of study. It seems to have been a favorite place for the choice spirits of the Renaissance, and in spite of the fearful persecutions of pagan emperors and Christian princes, it still retained the grand philosophy of Pythagoras, nor were the sacred fires on the altar of Vesta ever suffered to die out. Poets, philosophers, artists, and other noted men were born here, or had at least taken up their abode here. They were, however, eclipsed by the fame of one man, equally remarkable for the fate of his life and for the grandeur of

his mind and spirit; one who can readily be ranked with that of Socrates in knowledge, and who also met a similar fate.

Giordano Bruno had a great attachment to his home. He speaks of it as "the golden fields of Nola." One of his youthful pleasures was to pass a night on the mountain Cicada—near his home—and watch the stars, or contemplating, to his childish mind, the desolate sides of Vesuvius. From the distance it looked barren and bleak, but when seen near, it was covered with elms and oaks, the branches of which were hung with grapevines. He recalls in later years how he used to think this was the limit of the horizon, or the ultimate end of the earth. It was then that Giordano Bruno learned, to his astonishment, that vision of man is deceptive. He saw that in going forward we always remain in the center of our horizon, and soon the thought took root that nature is everywhere one and the same, that only distance changes the appearance of things. He saw how illusory the senses

might be, and how carefully the judgment must be held when only guided by the senses; the mind may grasp nature in her grandeur, but the sage must work out the details.

Bruno seems to have been of a sad disposition and possessed of a lively imagination. His inner perceptions soon eclipsed his exterior reason. In his early years the times were full of agitation and misfortune, and were scarcely propitious to study. Earthquakes, pestilence, and famine scourged fair Campania. The Turks fought and ravished the country, and carried off slaves. The land was also infested by bandits and outlaws. But worse—the Inquisition, with the bulls of Paul III, and at the instigation of Ignatius of Loyola, stood ready to light its fires and slaughter the heretic. Fateful constellations ruled the tragic nativity of Bruno.

His father, Giovanna, was a soldier, and his mother, named Francesca Savolini, baptized her son under the name of

Philip. At fifteen he entered the monastery of the Dominicans at Naples. Whether this was from an early religious enthusiasm, or to receive the protection of the convent, where he could study more devotedly, we cannot say. This same convent having been the abode of Thomas Aquinas three hundred years before, may have been a factor in his choice, for he tells us he read with preference at that time the writings of Thomas Aquinas. It was in this convent he received the monastic name of Giordano. This name was that of one of the immediate followers of St. Dominic, the general of the order, and his receiving the same name perhaps showed what hopes and wishes the order had in the capabilities of their new member.

Here for nearly thirteen years he studied, gaining for himself a vast knowledge of ancient philosophy, which is shown in his works. He evidently was a deep student of Plotinus, Pythagoras, the Orphic wisdom of Greece, as well. It was in this

convent that this powerful soul reached independence of thought, under the pressure of his automatic routine and deadening environments.

He seems early to have troubled his censor while a monk. He practised austere studies and his mind was held in fervor of mystical thought, so that his censor tried to divert him away from his higher occupations, and even fetter his mind, trying to change the freeman in the service of virtue to the slave of bewildering hypocrisy.

Bruno did not fail to notice the weaknesses and peculiarities of his brothers of the order. His sharp eye and cutting tongue spared not their delinquencies, and he soon turned his back on his companions, who, in turn, grew suspicious of him.

He tried to escape the childish exercises of the monks and their adoration for relics. Even during his novitiate he was threatened with an accusation in matters of belief. He had removed the pictures of the saints from his cell, and only re-

tained the crucifix. When one of his brothers read a poem called "The Seven Joys of Mary," he asked him to read something more sensible and rational. For this he only received a threat.

His eighteenth year, he mentions, he began to doubt the church doctrine of the trinity. He looked upon the Persons as attributes of the Deity, and referred to Augustinius who considered the person as a new thing and only used it with great caution. One may easily see him even at this early date, the iconoclast and spiritual crusader. The impulse to doubt is often a great blessing to the world.

Bruno's spiritual development received a decisive impetus, nay, even the destiny of his whole life was changed, on his first acquaintance with the works of Copernicus. "Copernicus' words knocked early at the portals of the youth's soul. But after twenty years the impression of it had still remained very vivid. Suddenly he seemed to see himself freed from fetters. The truths which he now believed to

see—yes, even to be able to grasp with his hands, seemed to have been until now imprisoned in the fictitious spheres of heaven. How much he admired the large soul of that German, who, unconcerned about the foolishness of the crowd, had remained steadfast toward the mighty tide of an opposite belief. He looked upon this new teaching as something related to his spirit, as an innate truth."

He could, he found, use it freely, and enlarged upon it. With bolder confidence, he removed the last bond which even Copernicus himself had left standing. His spirit took flight into the infinity of the Universe.

And how brightly shone the beautiful world to him now! What a wonderful possession, this new doctrine! With what imagination and inspiration did his whole being respond to it. The feeble medieval churchly world passed from his mental vision like a baneful phantasmagoria. But this new cosmology, this world-order, demanded a reconstruction of thought—a

new metaphysic, nay, a new theology, and in order to make them known he recognized this to be his life's mission, his true vocation. With what energy he devoted himself to his mission, that one who has discovered his genius can only tell.

From Neo-Platonism and the deeper writings of Nicolaus Von Cues he took principally the elements of his philosophy. He recognized in this gifted author an especial affinity, who was only held back from freer movement by his priestly garb. The spirit of inner inspiration was much needed in that day.

But to the muse of the cloister life, he not only devoted his deep philosophical studies and outlines, but also he added the cheerful occupation of writing earnest poetry. The comedy "Il Candelaio," and certainly also many of his sacred songs, which he later used in the Dialogues of "Gli Eroici Furori" (The Heroic Enthusiasts), had their origin at this time. This fine work of Bruno has been excellently translated into English by L. Williams,

in which the translator says it is an ethical poem, portraying "the struggles of the soul in its upward progress toward purification and freedom, and the author (Bruno) makes use of lower things to picture and suggest the higher. The aim of the Heroic Enthusiast is to get at the Truth and to see the Light, and he considers that all the trials and sufferings of this life are the cords which draw the soul upwards, and the spur which quickens the mind and purifies the will. The blindness of the soul may signify the descent into the material body, and visiting the 'various kingdoms' may be an allusion to the soul passing through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms before it arrives at man."

A satirical poem, "The Ark of Noah," dedicated to the Pope, appeared in 1570, which now, however, is not to be anywhere found.

We are acquainted only with its subject through a later dialogue. In it we find "the donkey quarrels for precedence

among the animals, which to lose is great danger," referring to the Pope and the worldly powers.

In his twenty-fourth year Bruno, after consecration, read his first mass in the city of Campania, and remained there for some time in the cloister of St. Bartholomew's, and other cloisters of the province, performing his priestly functions, reading masses, and delivering sermons. After three years he returned to the monastery at Naples, evidently disgusted with the conditions he had encountered, for in his work "*Il Candelaio*" he pictures the fearful demoralization which surrounded him and arraigned in strong satire the principal groups of stupidity, rascality, and hypocrisy.

Being of a frank and open character, he was unable to hide his estrangement to the church's doctrines. He put his convictions before some of his companions, and with great zeal they hastened to lay them before their superiors. It seems he had contrasted and evidently praised the

methods of the Unitarians, in expounding their theological doctrines, who referred all things to the Father. This and other heretical propositions were brought to the notice of the Holy Office, who quietly observed him, and next threatened him. Warned of his danger, he secretly left Naples and took the road to Rome, where he was received into the cloister Della Minerva. Here a sudden though not unexpected turn of events followed.

The provincial of the order, Fra Domenico Vito, raised against him, in one hundred and thirty articles, the accusation of heresy. Instructions also for his arrest had been forwarded from Naples. Through letters from friends Bruno had learned that some of his concealed and forbidden books left in Naples had been found, namely, the writings from Chrysostom and Hieronymus, but with some notes of Erasmus attached. To have possessed such works could only make matters much worse. So he quickly and resolutely laid aside the habit of his Order

and wandered destitute and forlorn about the Roman Campagna, his very sorry condition being a safeguard against the robbers and bandits who infested that land. This was in 1576, or the twenty-eighth year of his age. He broke his monastic vows to pledge himself anew to truth and to reason.

And now commenced the wanderings of Bruno, lasting over fifteen years, and which led him over half of Europe. He tried everywhere to make known his new teachings concerning the universe. A passionate restlessness within him never permitted him to find a permanent place for his work. Reversals and the secret doings of his enemies followed him. His life was a constant struggle with the guild of scientists. Wherever he went he made enemies, partly through his satirical address and possible hastiness. His zeal carried him along, and was a marked contrast to the indifference of his opponents in the presentation of their science and philosophy. He said that other philosophers

had not found out so much, therefore they had not so much to guard and defend as he had; they may of course think less of a philosophy which was good for nothing, or of one which they knew nothing of; but he who has found a hidden truth and is charmed by its beauty, is jealous that it shall not be counterfeited, or neglected or desecrated.

In the midst of this restlessness he created his philosophical masterpieces, the "Italian Dialogues," in which his spirit is expressed so freely and richly. The Latin writings are full of poetic verve and mystical depth. Besides these he wrote a number of treatises on the Lullic Art, which was founded by Raymundus Lullus, a Spanish scholar of the thirteenth century. With the diligence peculiar to genius, he multiplied his powers in many ways.

Returning to Bruno's flight; we find him on a Genoese vessel bound for the Ligurian port, hoping to find a refuge from his persecutors, but Genoa was in

a state of civil war, and also devastated by pestilence. Once more on the road to exile we find him at Noli, on the Riviera, a pretty little town nestling at the foot of high hills, crowned with feudal castles and towers. Here he instructed boys in grammar, to get sustenance, but this modest employment did not satisfy him, for he delivered to some gentlemen of standing, lectures in astronomy, or the science of the Sphere. He expounded the system of Copernicus—and with great enthusiasm spoke of the plurality of worlds, and the movement of the earth.

From Liguria, like Columbus, Bruno was banished. In the humble schoolmaster teaching grammar there was nothing to fear, but the nobles, bishops, and clergy who attended his lectures suspected heresy, and in a few months Bruno moved on to Turin, where men of letters and philosophy were attracted by the generosity of Duke Emanuele Filberto, a warrior, artist, and scholar, and a man of strong character. But the Duke had

fallen into the hands of the Jesuits, and Bruno, who had hoped to teach in the university, found the place occupied by his enemies.

L. Williams, in his introduction to "The Heroic Enthusiasts," tells us that Tasso, the Italian poet, had also sought refuge in Turin, driven by adverse fortune. "Both so great, both subject to every species of misfortune and persecution in life, and destined to immortal honors after their death, the light of genius burned in them both, the fire of enthusiasm flamed in each alike, and on the forehead of each one was set the sign of sorrow and of pain. Both Bruno and Tasso entered the cloister as boys; the one joined the Dominicans, the other the Jesuits; and in the souls of both might be discerned the impress of the Order to which they belonged. Both went forth from their native place longing to find a broader field of action and greater scope for their intellectual powers. The one left Naples, carrying in his heart the Pagan

and Christian traditions of the noble enterprises and the saintly heroism of Olympus and of Calvary, of Homer and the Fathers, of Plato and St. Ignatius; the other was filled with the philosophical thought of the primitive Italian and Pythagorean epochs, fecundated by his own conceptions and by the new age. Philosopher and apostle of an idea, Bruno consecrated his life to the development of it in his writings and to the propagation of his principles in Europe by the fire of enthusiasm. The one surprised the world with the melody of his songs, being, as Dante says, the '*dolce sirena che i marinari in mezza al mare smaga*,' he lulled the anguish of lacerated Italy and gilded the chains which bound her; the other tried to shake her; to recall her to life with the vigor of thought; with the force of reason; with the sacrifice of himself. The songs of Tasso were heard and sung from one end of Italy to the other, and the poet dwelt in palaces and received the caress and smile of princes; while Bruno, dis-

coursing in the name of reason and science, was rejected, persecuted, and scourged, and only after three centuries of ingratitude, of calumny, and of forgetfulness, does his country show signs of appreciating him and of doing justice to his memory. In Tasso the poet predominates over the philosopher; in Bruno the philosopher predominates over and eclipses the poet. The first sacrifices thought to form; the second is careful only of the idea. Again, both are full of a conception of the Divine, but the God that the dying Tasso confessed is a God that is expected and comes not; while the God that Bruno proclaims he already finds within himself. Tasso dies in his bed in the cloister, uneasy as on a bed of thorns; Bruno, amidst the flames, stands out as on a pedestal, and dies serene and calm."

Our wanderer reached Venice at a time of great confusion and terror. The plague which had devastated the entire upper Italy, with the exception of Turin, had

reached this city. Half of the inhabitants had died—the aged Titian, almost a centenarian, succumbed to its deadly harvest. Venice was at that time the book mart of Europe, and Bruno, fearless of the conditions prevalent, decided to remain and prepare for the press “The Signs of the Times,” hoping thereby to gain a little money for his few wants. This work, like all his writings published in Italy, was destroyed.

Next we find Bruno at Padua, but as the university and printing houses were closed on account of the plague, he did not tarry long. Lodging with a few Brothers of his Order, he says “they persuaded me to wear the dress (Dominican) again, even though I would not profess the religion it implied, because they said it would aid in my wayfaring to be thus attired; and so I got a white cloth robe, and I put on the hood which I had preserved when I left Rome.”

After three years of wandering he finally decided to leave his native land.

He hated dissimulation. “Altiora Peto” was Bruno’s motto, and dressed as monk, schoolmaster, mechanic, he had found no resting-place—nowhere to call home, none to understand him, all ready to denounce him. He viewed with sorrow the upper classes, who were corrupt, illiterate, and uncultivated. His country was overrun with Spaniards, and everywhere was the petty tyrant.

CHAPTER II

THE EXILE AND WANDERER

“But yet for some in vain the call is heard,
Heedless and unprepared they mind it not.”—G. B.

So he turned his back on Italy, which had so mistrusted him. He crossed the Alps on foot and arrived in Geneva. Here he met an entire colony of Italian fugitives, adherents of the reform doctrine, led by the Marchese Galeazzo Carraciola, who was a nephew of Paul IV. The Marchese received the persecuted one in a not unfriendly manner. He, however, obliged him to exchange the habit of the Dominicans for a more worldly dress, and Bruno never again wore the habit of his Order. How long his sojourn in Geneva was, seems uncertain. He supported himself by printing and correcting proof sheets.

From time to time he attended the service of his reformed countrymen. But his independent spirit rebelled against a blind

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compulsory and exacting faith. He had some controversy with Antoine de la Faye, a member of the Academy. This gentleman had given a lecture, and Bruno, in a pamphlet, corrected, it is said, twenty errors made in this lecture. Both Bruno and the printer were arrested, and our philosopher only gained his liberty by recalling the contents of his pamphlet. It was made known to him that he must adopt Calvinism or leave Geneva. Soon after he left the city so intolerant, in which twenty-six years before Severt had mounted the stake.

Next he turned to France, and, reaching Lyons, which was a city of refuge against religious persecutions, he tried to get work, but failed, so went on to Toulouse. Soon after he started private lectures on The Sphere or on Astronomy, and receiving here the degree of Doctor, competed for the chair of philosophy, which, according to his own statement, he kept for two years. His lectures were many and varied. He had to give up his

chair owing to the civil war under Henry of Navarre, but not before he had seized and used his opportunity to introduce and discuss the deepest questions. What is the origin and destiny of humanity? What of the soul—is it matter or spirit, potential or real, individual or universal, mortal or immortal? Is man gifted with a soul, or are all beings equally so? Great questions, indeed, were these in that dark day.

Bruno seems to have given great thought to these questions. He taught that everything has a soul. One great Universal Mind penetrates all and moves all things. Nothing is lost, but all nature is in a state of transmutation, in the act of becoming. He taught the movements of the earth, and the force, clarity, and novelty of his opinions roused up the lethargic clergy, and so he retired, going to Paris, which he reached in 1587. In the two years in Toulouse he published “*De Anima*” and “*De Clavis Magis*,” both of which were lost.

In Paris he tried to make use of his rights as a graduate doctor, and at once announced special lectures, choosing very scholarly subjects, for which he received great applause. He was greatly admired for his eloquence and his remarkable memory. He was offered a professorship, but had to refuse it; as an excommunicant it was impossible for him to fulfil certain duties which this place required of him, namely, to attend mass.

But the reputation of his marvellous gifts had reached the ear of King Henry III, before whom he was summoned to appear. Henry was inclined to superstition, and he tried to find out if Bruno's power of memory was a natural thing or something magical. Bruno suspected the King, and succeeded in showing him that the powers of his memory were natural and not uncanny. Better to convince the King he dedicated a pamphlet to his Majesty, entitled, "The Shadow of Ideas," a dissertation of the Lullic Art, which was his principal means in acquiring memory and sustained eloquence. This rare fac-

ulty enabled him to write the richest representations of pictures the most distant to his present thought. "The Shadow of Ideas," however, contained more than writings on the Lullic Art. In it he outlined his philosophy, and in style it resembled much Plato's Cave in the "Republic." In light and shade, or in parable and idea, there was an interchange showing the relationship of ideas to things, and things to their creative foundation. Bruno strongly emphasized the unity of the universe, also the principle of unfoldment or development; how nature brings forth the All from the All and gradually changes the lower to the higher, and that the mind has power to recognize the All from the All, yet the mind of men comprehends the truth only in a picture, therefore the expression, "The Shadow of Ideas."

In Paris, Bruno gave still further evidence of the versatility of his talents. He published "Il Candelaio," a comedy. At the Sorbonne, philosophical questions were discussed with much freedom, showing he was not exclusive either in philoso-

phy or religion. He favored neither the Huguenot nor the Catholic faction. For this reason did he obtain the faculty of lecturing at Sorbonne. We must not gather from this that Bruno was indifferent to religion. He aimed for higher and nobler things. He professed a more pure and complete faith, to wit, the love of humanity and of wisdom. Bruno, as we now know, was not a man to conceal his ideas, which he launched out with great fervor.

The sudden conversion of the King, coupled with the free speaking of Bruno, compelled him to leave Paris. Equipped with a letter of introduction from the King to his ambassador in London, Michel de Castelnau de Manvissiere, Bruno came over to England, not merely to become acquainted with the land and the people, but to impart the doctrines of the Copernican system and win them over to broader thinking.

From Bruno's writing we find him in Oxford, where he introduced himself in an independent manner by issuing a pam-

phlet on the "Thirty Seals." He lectured on the Pythagorean symbolism, on the immortality of the soul, and on the new system of Copernicus. He naturally made enemies of the Oxford profession, especially in his unheard-of insistence on the numberless sun systems in an infinite universe. The oppositions to his teachings were loud and stormy. In a public debate, given in honor of the presence of a Polish prince, Johann a Lesco, in Oxford, June, 1583, he defended his new cosmological doctrine to a few doctors of theology. He ascribed to himself the victory in this debate, but the real outcome of the same resulted in the restriction again to continue his lecture. He repeatedly appeared alone at Court. Elizabeth was very fond of showing her knowledge of Italian, and was greatly pleased with his conversation. Bruno, on his part, eulogized the Queen in the flowery style of the time, naming her as the great Amphitrite. He approached very near, while visiting the Court, the brilliant statesman, Sir Philip

Sidney. To this noble soldier and poet Bruno dedicated “*Lo Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*.”

In London he made public a new book entitled “Ash Wednesday,” in which he attacked the Oxford pedants. He was obliged to keep himself concealed from a London mob. Yet, withal, the few years he passed in England were the most productive and happiest time of his life. All his Italian writings which were saved were edited and published in England.

Bruno was one of the first of the philosophers of the newer age, who, like the ancients, treated scientific questions in a living language. In his dialogues he aimed to give a popular presentation in a fluent conversational manner, after the style of Plato. His style is varied, his means of expression facile, interchanging with earnest and whimsical wit, and again with instructive explanations, vivid descriptions, satire or bitter reproof. There was no expression, whether sensational or placid, of which he was not master.

In his Oxford lectures, when only thirty-six, we find him anticipating the doctrines of Goethe and Darwin. Speaking of the soul, he taught that nothing in the universe is lost, everything is in a state of transformation; therefore body and soul, spirit and matter, are equally eternal. The body may dissolve, but becomes transformed; the soul transmigrates, and, drawing around itself atom to atom, it reconstructs for itself a new body. The spirit which animates and moves all things is One. Everything differentiates according to the different forms and bodies in which it operates. Some animate things are inferior by reason of the meanness of the body in which they operate, others are superior through the richness of the same.

In his teachings we see the idea later in Darwin of the transformation of species, and of the organic unity of the animal world, and the alternation from segregation to aggregation, which we know as death and life, is no other than change of form.

CHAPTER III

VISITS THE GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

“The Divine Light is always in man, presenting itself to the senses and to the comprehension, but man rejects it.”—G. B.

THE recalling of the cultured French ambassador Castelnau naturally brought about Bruno’s departure from England. He returned to Paris, but did not enter the university; frequent tumults preceding the civil war interrupted study, and Bruno had already determined to visit other universities, particularly those of Germany. Before he departed he desired to make a further onslaught on the current doctrines of the philosophy of nature taught in Paris. In a thesis of one hundred and twenty articles, which he handed to the directory of the university, he contradicted, with pointed exactness, the Aristotelian philosophy. In the expression of his sentences he attained a preci-

sion which was scarcely even surpassed by Spinoza. Crowds of admirers were awakened to an enthusiasm such as never had been witnessed since the days of Abelard. The printing of the theses was permitted, their debate granted, although many of them contradicted the Catholic doctrine. The debate took place during Pentecost, May 25, 1588, not at Sorbonne, but in the College of Cambray. In an inspired speech Bruno, through the interpreter, Jean Hennequin, of Paris, declared the discovery of numberless worlds in the One Infinite Universe. Nothing was more deplorable, declared he, than the habit of blind belief, for of all other things it hinders the mind from recognizing such matters as are in themselves clear and open. It was proof of a base and low mind for one to wish to think with the masses or majority, merely because the majority were the majority. Truth does not change because it is or is not believed by a majority of people. However, he cautioned that they should not be influenced by the

fervor of his speech, but by the weight of his argument and the majesty of truth.

Immediately after this impressive discourse Bruno started on his journey to Germany. In Marburg he was denied permission to lecture. In Wittenberg, "the German Athens," he found welcome. Here he found Alberich Gentillus, his countryman, and one of the founders of the doctrine of people's rights. Other professors welcomed him and treated him as their colleague, receiving him into their homes, although, as he expressed himself, he was unknown to them, nor recommended, and not even examined in their faith, and was also an opponent to the philosophy to which they adhered. Only the Calvinistic party of the university remained unfriendly to him, and these, after the death of Kurfurst August, gaining precedence under his successor, Christian, he was obliged to yield, after having held for nearly two years a position enabling him to discourse on philosophy, and edit a number of pamphlets on mnemonics.

In a farewell address to the senate and the university, he eulogized the mental greatness of the Germans, who had only been known to him previously as a people of much drinking. He prophesied that they would lead in science. "Here," he said, "is being prepared the soil for the transplanting of wisdom from the lands of Greece and Italy. May Jupiter grant that the Germans may recognize their strength and strive to aim for the highest, and they will be no longer men, but rather resemble gods, for divine and god-like is their genius." He also highly praised Luther.

From Wittenberg Bruno went to Prague, where he in vain sought for a position and support. He dedicated to Kaiser Rudolph II a pamphlet against the mathematicians and philosophers of the present age. In this he professed his religion of universal love of man, a doctrine above all controversies. This dedication only brought him a present from the Emperor, and after staying several

months he resolved to go to Helmstadt, where Duke Julius of Braunschweig had founded a new university. Bruno remained here one year. During this time the Duke died, and the university "Academia Julia" honored the memory of its founder with a solemn requiem, in which Bruno took a part with an "Oratio Consolatoria." In this oration Bruno said it seemed not by mere chance, but by Providence, he had been directed here after so many dangers and sorrows.

Banished from his fatherland for the sake of truth, here he was received as a citizen and lived in freedom and safety, while in his own country he had been exposed to the hungry jaws of the Roman wolves.

The hopes which he had expressed in these words were not to be fulfilled. This time it was the eager persecution of a Lutheran pastor which terminated his scarcely commenced activity. The Superintendent of Helmstadt, Boethius, excommunicated him before the assembled

community, and, as the rector of the university, theologian Hofmann, would not or could not protect him, he was again obliged to look around for a new location.

He chose Frankfort-on-the-Main (the Leipzig of that time), with the intention of finishing here his Latin works and having them printed. He at once communicated with the well-known publishers, J. Wechel and P. Fischer, but as the council of the city denied him the privilege of staying, they procured for him shelter in the cloister of the Carmelites, on the outskirts of the city. Here he was incessantly at work, absorbed in his studies and his writing. All day long he could be found in his cell either writing or meditating—in feverish haste he worked, and was only interrupted by a visit to Zurich to instruct several young men there. In Germany particularly he showed the same boldness and courage; always treated with scanty welcome, nevertheless crowds of the intelligent flocked to his lectures.

“He was,” said the prior of the Carmelite cloister, “a man of universal mind, skilled in all sciences, but he had not a trace of religion”—possibly not a trace of the religion of the said Carmelite monk!

Especial mention should be made of his works which appeared in quick succession in Frankfort, and which were dedicated to Heinrich Julius, of Braunschweig,—“The Threefold Smallest,” “The Monad, Number, and Figure,” and “The Immeasurability of the Innumerable Worlds.” In the first-mentioned writing he teaches that the same power which develops itself into the infinity of the universe, lives also in the smallest particle. It is one and the same in the greatest and in the smallest. The universe could be destroyed if we could destroy the most infinitesimal part of it. Similar thoughts as these are found in the writings of Leibnitz; even the expression of “monad of monads,” meaning the creative source of all things, has been used also by Bruno, in his philosophy, but in a deeper sense.

His work treating on "The Seven Liberal Arts" was written at this time.

The fair at Frankfort was visited by a great many foreign publishers, principally from Italy. On one such occasion Bruno made the acquaintance of the Venetian booksellers, Bertano and Ciotto, and the latter brought his writings to Venice. There in Ciotto's bookshop the same fell into the hands of the young noble, Giovanni Mocenigo, who with great eagerness inquired as to the whereabouts of the author and desired to be instructed by him in "the secret of memory and other things that he knew."

Mocenigo was born of one of the noblest families of Venice; he was suspicious, bashful, and a man of indecision, and he became the tool in the hands of his spiritual tutors. He was well informed of the secret workings of the Inquisition, and this poor, miserable weakling forced himself into Bruno's life, writing him again and again, full of fine professions of friendship, inviting him to Venice, prom-

ising him protection and care. It was Ciotto who forwarded the correspondence. On Bruno's return from Zurich he resolved to accept the invitation. He was tired of his poverty, his wandering life, and he longed for his native country, the charm of which he knew so well how to describe in vivid colors.

It was natural he should feel himself safe in one of the noblest families as a guest. Could he refuse such an offer, which at least for some time would save him from poverty and sorrow? He observed nothing of the invisible net his enemies had spread for him. Having no advising friends, absorbed in his work, the harmless man, in spite of his combative-ness and courageous temperament, made a false step. The wisdom and cunning of life is withheld from those who would live a hundred years or more!

CHAPTER IV

RETURNS TO ITALY—THE CONSPIRACY

“The true aim in life should be illumination, the true morality the practice of justice, the true redemption should be the liberation of the soul from error and its union with God through consciousness.”—G. B.

AT first all went well. Bruno arrived in Venice in October, 1591, and settled in rented quarters. Mocenigo’s instruction commenced, but was not followed with any regularity. Bruno tried to instil into his pupil’s head the principles of logic, the elements of mathematics, and the rudiments of mnemonic art—the pupil disliked study. It was commonly understood in those days that superior intellect meant, in other words, sorcery or magic. Mocenigo did not want dry study, although Bruno worked with great patience to teach him. Bruno found time to go to Padua for several months to give private

lectures to German students. The studio at Padua at that time was greatly celebrated. Foreigners of note in science and art were numbered among its scholars. Copernicus reached there in the beginning of the sixteenth century, P. P. Rubens at the end of the same. A few months after Bruno had left, Galileo called from Pisa and commenced to teach, September, 1592 —the prophet of modern science was followed by its creator.

In March, 1592, Bruno again returned to Venice, and now allowed himself to be persuaded to live in the home of his student Mocenigo. Bruno was often seen in the bookshops, in literary and philosophical societies which grouped themselves around Andrea Morosini, where, too, Bruno was a well-received guest.

When Bruno believed he had taught his pupil all he called for, he intended to return to Frankfort in order to continue the publishing of his works. He desired permission to depart, but Mocenigo, not satisfied with the instruction he had received,

had in vain and ignorantly waited to be initiated into the magic arts and sciences which Bruno was supposed to know. His pupil had fear mixed with a desire for these studies, a fear because they were forbidden by his church. He therefore denied permission for Bruno's departure, and hinted that he knew means to force him to remain if he would not do so of his own free will and pleasure.

Our philosopher must have been greatly deceived regarding his position when he answered that he feared not the Inquisition, for he had not hindered anybody to live according to their faith. Bruno did not look upon his breach in the Church as unamenable. While in Toulouse and Paris he had repeatedly made the attempt to reconcile himself with the Church, and at this very time he placed great hopes in his work, "The Seven Liberal Arts." He intended to forward this to the new Pope, Clement VIII, whom he thought was inclined toward sciences, and hoped with it to re-

gain absolution and reinstatement into the communion with the Church without being obliged to return into the Order. But events were to develop differently from any that he could foresee. He insisted on his decision to depart, and ordered his things to be sent on to Frankfurt.

Mocenigo did not dare to lose a moment in order to accomplish his treacherous intentions. The Holy Office would have laid hands on Bruno immediately on his arrival in Italy, but Mocenigo advised certain liberty, saying that he could not escape, and Bruno might further compromise himself.

Bruno could not escape; he had intended to leave next day, but early in the morning, while yet in bed, Mocenigo entered the chamber on pretence that he wished to speak with him, and, calling his servant Bartolo and five or six gondoliers who were waiting without, they forced Bruno to rise, and, conducting him to a garret, locked him in. This was the beginning of

his imprisonment and torture, which lasted eight years. The day after, in the company of his jailer, he was taken to the prison of the Holy Office, and left there. The depositions and denunciations made by his enemies were many. At the head of the accusations stands the doctrine of the Infinity of the universe, the plurality of worlds. Bruno was charged with the assertion that animal as well as human lives proceeded from a process of dissolution. This may have been a misunderstanding of his bold hypothesis of the natural origin of the organisms. The philosopher who accepted a manifest order of the human race knew also between the animal and human soul only stands a difference of development, all embodying the one Being. These and many other doctrines were attacked.

The Court was opened promptly, and most of the provinces of Italy were represented by their delegates in the early part of the trial. Bruno, on being interrogated, gave an account of his wandering life, his

occupations and works. He calmly and with great dignity unfolded to this terrible tribunal his doctrine, its principles and the logical consequences. Serenely he spoke of the universe, how there were infinite worlds in infinite space, how all things in all forms and species were divine. He tried to explain the unity of all things, the dependence and interdependence of all things, yet the existence of God in all. With a spirit not broken by silence and torture, he refused to recant.

After nine months in prison in Venice, Bruno, manacled, was conveyed to the Bridge of Sighs, through the lagoons to Ancona, where he remained incarcerated until the prison of the Roman Inquisition received him.

The translator of “*Gli Eroici Furori*” aptly quotes, in his excellent introduction to that work, a poem that seems strangely prophetic. Did Bruno feel the loneliness of his prison and the sufferings in the torture chamber when he wrote:

“By what condition, nature or fell chance,
In living death, dead life I live?”

Or yet further from the same work we
read:

“The soul nor yields nor bends to these rough
blows,
But bears, exulting, this long martyrdom,
And makes a harmony of these sharp pangs.”

CHAPTER V

THE MARTYRDOM

"The wise man fears not death, yea there may be times when he seeks death, or at least goes peacefully forth to meet it."—G. B.

THE day for the burning was fixed to take place February 16, in the year 1600. Clement VIII was about to hold his jubilee, and pilgrims and prelates from all parts of Italy were present.

The morning arrived. In the Campo dei Fiori, a flower market, the pyre was made. Bruno, scarcely fifty years old, with thin, emaciated face, with dark, fiery eyes, the forehead luminous with lofty thought, his poor body frail, showing signs of fearful torture, his hands in chains, his feet bare, in early morning with slow steps walked toward the funeral pile.

Signor Levi gives, in his book on the life of Bruno, an account of how he re-

ceived the sentence of death passed upon him.

“You, O judges! feel perchance more terror in pronouncing this judgment than I do in hearing it.” Bruno’s holy murderers could not comprehend him.

The sun shone brightly that early morning. The fire was lighted. The flames leaped up, mixing with the beautiful sunbeams. The rest is easily told. Bruno stood in the midst of the flames with his arms crossed, his head raised, his eyes open. A calm, steady look rebuked in its gentleness his ignorant and misguided tormentors. When the flames curled cruelly around him, he winced not. Even in his last moments an idolatrous monk thrust through the blaze a crucifix, but the dying martyr turned his head aside, more in pity than aversion.

“He was the first in all the world who died for truth without the expectation of reward.”

When the body was consumed a monk took a handful of the ashes and scattered

them to the winds, and a month later the Bishop of Sidonia presented himself at the Treasury of the Pope and demanded two scudi in payment for having degraded *Fra Giordano*, the heretic.

So to thee, noble Bruno, thou prophet of science, we in gratitude remember thee, and in humble service again recall thy noble thoughts. It is to thy courage that we owe a great debt of gratitude, for laying the foundation for positive science. Thou prophet of insight, the fatal fire that freed thy immortal spirit is dead, but thy spirit has already set many a heart aflame with new ambition and has cheered many a pilgrim on the Path!

Many men from many lands unveiled a monument to Giordano Bruno in the center of Campo dei Fiori on the 9th of June, 1889. The bronze statue is placed on the very spot where Bruno was sacrificed.

The Pope, on that day, wept and flung himself into an agonized prayer before the statue of St. Peter, grieving over the

desecration of his holy city, prostrated for hours because the memory of a brave man, a philosopher and martyr had been justly honored. The same church which yet abhors this so-called arch-heretic will, we hope, canonize him in the future as one of their saints, who broadened and beautified men's minds. Truly it is said that the judgment of one age is annulled by the judgment of another. We are expectant and waiting for this recognition, and let us not fear that we shall wait in vain. "To die for conviction is a rare and happy privilege."

TO GIORDANO BRUNO
PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR

I

Son of the lightnings and the light that glows
Beyond the lightnings or the morning light,
Soul splendid with all-righteous love of right,
In whose keen fire all hopes and fears and woes
Were clean consumed, and from their ashes rose
Transfigured, and intolerable to sight
Save of purged eyes, whose lids had cast off night
In love's and wisdom's likeness when they close,
Embracing and between them truth stands fast,
Embraced of either; thou whose feet were set
On English earth while this was England yet,
Our friend that are, our Sidney's* friend thou wast
Heart hardier found and higher than all men's past,
Shall not we praise thee, though thine own forget?

II

Lift up thy Light on us and on thine own,
O Soul whose spirit on earth was as a rod
To scourge of priests, a sword to pierce their God,
A staff for man's free thought to walk alone
A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne
On ways untrodden where his fathers trod,
Ere earth's heart withered at a light priest's nod,
And all men's mouths that made not prayer made
moan.

From bonds and torments and the ravishing flame,
Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet
Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,
And walk with him apart till Shelley came
To make the heaven of heaven more heavenly
sweet,
And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

SWINBURNE.

*Sir Philip Sidney.



BRUNO'S MONUMENT IN ROME

CHAPTER VI

BRUNO'S TEACHING OF THE SOUL

"The mind which aspires to the Divine splendor flees from the society of the crowd and retires from the multitude of subjects."—G. B.

"FOR general contemplation, and uplift of spirit," says Goethe, "Bruno's ideas require much to separate the pure gold from the gross and uneven strains of other matter." His ideas are so great that his philosophy can be compared with various precious metals, the getting of which must be systematically pursued in order to do justice to this gigantic thinker. He might justly be termed a second Pythagoras, whose system penetrates the social and intellectual history of Italy, both ancient and modern. Bruno resuscitated these doctrines, giving them a bolder and clearer outline, and a more positive direction.

Pythagoras taught that numbers are the beginning of things, or the cause of the existence of material things; they are not final, but always changing their position and attributes; they are variable and relative. Beyond and above all this transformation, there is the Immutable, the All, the One.

The Infinite must be One, as one is the absolute number; in the original One are contained all the numbers; in the One are contained all the elements of the universe.

Bruno elucidated from this abstract doctrine fixed principles, giving them more distinct development.

One is the perfect number; it is the primitive monad. From the One proceeds the infinite series of numbers, which again withdraw and are resolved into the One. So from Substance, which is the One, proceeds the myriad of worlds, and from the worlds proceed myriads of living creatures. From the union of one with the diverse is generated the universe.

From this absolute One, the sum of

the sensible and intellectual world, millions of stars and suns are produced and developed. Each sun is the center of as many worlds, which are distributed in as many distinct series, in an infinite number of concentric centers and systems. These numberless suns, with their planets, visible or invisible, pursue their courses through the immeasurable space. Each sun system is attracted or repelled, moved by an internal passion or attraction. Each turns on its own center, and moves in a spiral toward the center of the whole, toward which center every sun and system of suns, with their planets, tend with infinite passionate ardor. In this great center resides the sun of suns, the unity of unities, the temple or altar of the universe. In this altar burns the vital principle of the universe—called sometimes the sacred fire of Vesta.

All constellations, says Bruno, are organisms, infinitely graded in size and form, each again infinitely graded and compounded units, the fundamental unity

of which and the last substratum is mathematically the point, physically the atom, and metaphysically the monad. The number and variety of these monads is unlimited, as is also the number of individuals which therefrom arise, is infinite. In the world of centers, whether atoms, monads, or suns, there is progression from ascent to descent, or from spirit to that which we call matter.

Every monad is in itself a living mirror of the universe. So in this entire form—the universe, slumber all monads, and all manner of forms in which matter is capable of expressing itself. Every form is the result of the indwelling soul, every activity in nature is nothing else but to bring into existence or appearance the latent form. All is thought, passion, ardor moving into form. There is no end to this form-producing faculty in nature, it is infinite. There is nothing without life, nothing unsouled, nothing dead, nothing inorganic, but all, even the stone, is from eternity to eternity, ever given an

uninterrupted motion and change, either in an ascending or a descending line.

Through all works the same spirit, the same mind which dwells in and permeates matter.

From the All—this unity which governs variety, from the movement of every world around its sun, of every sun around its central sun, the sun of suns, which informs all with the rays of the spirit, with the light of thought—is generated that perfect harmony of colors, sounds, forms, which charm the sight and captivate and enthrall the intellect.

That which in the starry worlds is harmony becomes in the individual virtue, and in companies of human beings, law. That which is light in the spheres becomes intelligence and science in the world of the spirit and in humanity. We must study the harmony that rules in the celestial worlds, that we may understand and deduce laws which govern our earth and civil bodies.

Bruno goes on to show that the Bible,

the sacred book of man, is the heavens; there does man find God's word and law written.

In the science of numbers dwells harmony, and it is our duty to identify ourselves with this harmony, for from it is derived the harmonic law which draws men together in companies.

Through the revolution of the worlds through space, around their suns, from their order, their constancy, and their measure, the mind comprehends the progress and condition of men and their duties toward each other.

Human souls are likened by Bruno to lights, distinct from the universal soul, which diffuses over and penetrates everything.

A purifying process guides each soul on from one form to another, from one world to another. The life of man is more than one little life, with a few experiences and trials, it is to be an effort, nay a struggle to reproduce on earth some of that goodness, beauty, and truth which are diffused

over the universe and constitute its harmony.

The process of growth is slow, and apparently full of oppositions. Just as our earth becomes formed, changed, and perfected, little by little, through cataclysms, convulsions, by fire, flood, earthquake, and eruptions, so it is with humanity. Through struggles man is fortified and raised. He can go through all by the religion of philosophy and thought. It is the mystical thread, the guiding star through every transformation, occasion, and experience.

“The vulgar creeds of religious bodies have not,” he said, “dared to reveal the Truth in its purity and essence.”

“Rather would the Church cover the truth with allegories, with myths and mysteries, which they call sacred; and humanity adoring the veil, failed to lift itself up to see the idea behind it. Men saw through the teachings of the Church the shadow rather than the light.”

In his book, “*Gli Eroici Furori*,” Bruno lays down the basis for the religion of

thought and science. He would prefer intelligence and progress of the intellect in the world of physics, metaphysics, and morals, rather than the commonly accepted so-called Christian perfections (resignation, devotion, and ignorance). The true aim of life should be illumination, the true morality, the practice of justice, the true redemption, the liberation of the soul from error, and its union with God through consciousness.

Bruno shattered the theories of historical creation, which were the prevalent ideas of his time. Nature was supposed to be fixed, not as it grows, but as it eternally is; nothing could change it but the arbitrary will of the Creator.

He started out with the Cosmos, the infinitely great; next the Microcosm, the infinitely small.

“The body is in the soul, the soul in the mind, and mind is in God,” therefore the life of the soul is the true life of man. So of all the faculties of man that which exalts his nature is Thought, for by it we

can contemplate and comprehend the universe, and thus in turn become Creators. It is through the exercise of thought that the affections become purified, and the will consequently strengthened. Then is true liberty gained in this union of will and thought.

Our philosopher repeatedly claims that blind faith, or supernatural grace, or any irrational and mystical impulse cannot bring illumination, but only the strength of a reformed intellect, and an enthusiasm which science and the contemplation of nature alone can give.

“The Divine light is always in man, presenting itself to the senses and to the comprehension, but man rejects it.”

How complex is the nature of man may be gathered from the following extracts:

“The soul is in the body locally only as intrinsic form and extrinsic moulder. It is that which forms the members and shapes the material from within and from without. The body then is in the soul, the soul in the intellect, the intellect in God.

“The intellect either is God or is in God, as says Plotinus. As in essence it is in God, which is its life, similarly by the intellectual operation and the will consequent upon such operation, it is related to its light and its beatific object.”

“The soul is in the body as a pilot in the ship, and in so far as the pilot moves together with the ship he is a part of it, but considered in his position as governor and mover is not part but the distinct and efficient cause. So the soul of the universe in so far as it animates and informs is an intrinsic and formal part of it, but in so far as it directs and governs, is not part, is not a principle but a cause.”

“Intellect gives laws to sense and yet deprives it of food.”

“Intellect is a pilgrim and stranger; sense is more domesticated and at home.”

“Soul complains that intellect in seeking higher life is neglecting lower, and seeks to recall the thoughts to the care of the body.”

“There is an intellect that gives being

to everything, called by Pythagoras and Timæus 'giver of the form'; a soul and formal principle that makes and informs everything, called by some 'origin of the form'; one material of which is made and formed everything, called by all 'receptacle of the forms.' ”

“Sense rises to imagination, imagination to reason, reason to intellect, intellect to mind; then the whole soul is converted to God and inhabits the intelligible world, whence on the other hand it descends in an inverse manner to the world of feeling, through the intellect, reason, imagination, sense, and vegetation.”

“The Platonists say that the soul as to its superior part always consists of the intellect, in which it has more of understanding than of soul, seeing that it is called soul only in so far as it vivifies the body and sustains it.”

“The order of diverse life which the soul takes in various bodies, and the scale of human powers, has as many degrees as that of nature (for man in all his powers

shows all the varieties of being)”; Bruno on this topic says:

“Therefore from the attachments it may be known whether souls go high or low, or whether they come from above or below, whether they are going to be beasts or rising toward divinity, according to their specific being, as understood by the Pythagoreans, or according to the similitude of the affections only, as is commonly believed—it not being proper that the human soul should become the soul of a brute, as well said Plotinus and other Platonists.”

“I have held and I hold that souls are immortal and that they are subsisting substances (that is, the intellectual souls), and that, speaking in a catholic manner, they do not pass from one body to another, but they go either to Paradise or to Purgatory or to Hell. Nevertheless, in philosophy I have reasoned that the soul, subsisting without the body and non-existent in the body, may in the same way that it is in one body be in another, pass-

ing from one body to another, the which if it be not true, at least appears to be the opinion of Pythagoras."

In this same work ("Gli Eroici Furori") he aptly portrays the relationship between the soul of man and the soul of the universe, the struggle of the former again to reach its real home. How Bruno tells this can be gathered from the following passages:

"There is no need to cast the eyes toward the heavens, to raise the hands, to direct our steps toward temples, or to intone to images, in order that our requests may be more favorably considered; but we should enter into our inner self, reflecting that God is nigh, with us, and within us, more fully than the man himself can possibly be, for He is the Soul of souls, Life of lives, and essence of essences."

"He (man) will be present in the body in such a way that the better part of him will be absent, and he will by an indissoluble bond unite himself to divine things,

considering himself to be too great to be the servant and slave of his body, which he ought not to regard otherwise than as a prison which restricts his liberty, a viscous substance that clogs his wings, a chain that fetters his hands, a log that holds fast his feet, or a veil that clouds his sight. But let him not be a slave, a captive, be-slimed, enchained, idle, deaf and blind, for the body which he leaves cannot any more tyrannize over him, so that the spirit proportionally is placed above the body, just as the corporeal and material world is subject to Divinity and to nature. Thus he will become strong against ill-fortune, magnanimous when injured, and brave in poverty, persecution, and tribulation.

“Such is the virtue of contemplation, as Iamblicus observes, that sometimes it happens, that not only the soul abstains from inferior acts, but it leaves the body completely.”

“To see Divinity is to be seen by it, as seeing the sun is concurrent with being

seen by the sun. Equally to be heard by Divinity is just to listen to it, and to be favored by it the same as to offer to it, for from that One, the same and immovable, proceed thoughts—certain and uncertain; desires—ardent and satiated; and reasonings—learned and ignorant; according as worthily or unworthily the man presents them to himself by means of the intellect, desires, and actions.

“The same pilot may be said to be the cause of the sinking or safety of the ship, according as he is present or absent from it; with this difference, that whilst the pilot by his ignorance or skill loses or saves the ship, the Divine power which is all in all, neither gives nor takes away—it is the conversion or rejection of it by others that causes the difference in its effects.”

“Our cognition will never be perfect in so far as understanding the highest object is concerned, but only so far as our intellect can understand it. Let it suffice that in this and other states there be present to

him the divine beauty so far as the horizon of his vision extends."

"Let it suffice that all make the attempt, and that each does his utmost, for the heroic nature is better content to fail and fall nobly in a high undertaking where it displays the dignity of its spirit, than to be completely successful in an ignoble and low work; better a dignified and heroic death than an unworthy and vile triumph."

"The intellectual power is never content nor satisfied with comprehended truth, but ever proceeds onward to truths incomprehensible. So also we see that the will which follows the apprehension is never satisfied with finite things. Therefore the essence of the soul is not related to any other end than the font of its substance and being."

"Wherefore shall we follow the true morality and the right path, we shall be magnanimous despisers of those things which childish thinkers esteem, and shall become truly greater than the gods which

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the blind crowd adores, because we shall become true contemplators of history, which is written in ourselves, and trained executors of the divine laws, which are hidden in the center of our hearts."

"This is that philosophy which opens out the senses, satisfies the spirit, enlarges the intellect, and converts man to the true bliss that he can have as man subsisting in this and similar bodies; for it frees him from solicitous care for pleasures and from blind sentiments of grief. . . ."

CHAPTER VII

GOD AND NATURE

“God is in every blade of grass, in every grain of sand, and in every atom that floats in the sunshine.”—G. B.

“AT first,” says Bruno, “we are doubtful and perplexed, but as we consider more profoundly the nature and substance of that in which we exist unchanged, we shall find that there is no death either for us or any being; that nothing substantially decays, but that all things flowing through infinite space only change in appearance; and because all is subservient to the highest good, we ought not to believe or think otherwise than that as everything is from God, so everything is good, makes for good and tends to good, that all is well, makes for well-being and tends to happiness.”

Returning again to his idea of Nature

and God, we find him saying that God is the mind expressed in Nature. He is the Nature of all natures; so we can in no higher or worthier way worship him than by searching for the law which keeps, upholds, and reconstructs this universe and living in that law.

“In every organism, even in the smallest, is the World-Mind present, but in no one organism entirely. If a man places his limited ideas above or apart from the world-idea, or if he subjugates to his own desires the welfare of the whole, then evil arises. On the other hand, when the will of the individual yields to the welfare of the whole, good follows.”

Every gain in the knowledge of natural law is, therefore, a moral deed or act; for it promotes the activity to conform with reason. Nature should guide our human reason, but not that our limited human reason should guide Nature. We can better become acquainted with natural laws when we go to the very source of Nature’s elements; and these are the atoms, the

monads and the minute. In perceiving the law of the minute and small, we cognize nature more fully, as the smallest thinkable is a mirror of the universe.

Bruno does not claim his method of philosophy to be infallible. "He who would try to persuade that there is but one way to obtain knowledge of Nature is a haughty, ambitious, and envious fellow, and only a fool or person without judgment could lay claim to possess it alone. There is not a philosophy which has not some good of its own, which may be found in others."

He evidently is opposed to skepticism; for he believes in the possibility of being able to recognize all things, since the organism of human intellect runs parallel to the organization of the intellect of the all.

The foundation of all scientific knowledge is evidence. Search for evidence. Bruno would recall those who have turned from the mirror of Nature, and closed their ears to the common Mother-All for

the purpose of pursuing a few foolish pranks of thought. "For things have not come about by mere accident, but through the determining mind." From a contemplative and speculative mind the inner may be judged by the outer appearance.

"The aim of all research should be to strive and discover from motion and diversity, rest and unity, and that is found by means of mind activity which serves the inner and the most deep."

He never lets an opportunity pass without giving loud praise to experience as the proof of all scientific knowledge.

"Why should we rest upon idle fancies, when we can be instructed where experience itself instructs us? Let us see how capable we can become through application, in experimenting, comparing, dividing, and compounding, and in observation. Do we not often experience, when we have a certain aim in view, a very much nobler goal than the one at which we had aimed? How frequently it has happened to the alchemist that he has found

something vastly better than the searched-for gold."

Bruno likens Nature to a countable number, a measurable size, or an idea that may be grasped by thought. Reason, on the other hand, is a counting number, a measuring size, and a thinking idea.

Since Nature acts according to the law of necessity, she never errs; and if at times she were not to create monstrosities, she would err. From the same necessity it follows that every accident is excluded from the working of Nature. She acts like an artist, and is herself Source and Substance of all art. Nature is living art, and a kind of intellectual power of the soul. It has been justly said that the work of Nature is the work of intelligence. As the sum total of all intelligence, she is in possession of all activities.

"Nature can within her boundaries make all from all, just as the intellect is capable of recognizing All from All."

"Nature is the expression of truth, for truth is only the law of reason observed in

all things. Truth is not alone physical, but it is in itself the creating life force and nature. Nature is the greatest demonstrator of profoundest secrets, for in her visible forms we see the reasonableness of ideas. She is the Fire which Prometheus secretly stole from the Gods and gave to men. She is the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for she herself is the reflection of the Idea."

While searching for Bruno's idea of God, we find him apparently expressing two diametrically opposed ideas; viz., God's identity with Nature, and God's dominion over Nature. This perhaps is due to the poetic and spiritual mind of the poet-philosopher.

"Nature is the most glorious of Divinity," and, "God demands and orders, and Nature executes and fulfils His will."

We read again of "The All-Being which manifests itself in the beauty and splendor of the Sun." "God is the monad of monads, the Substance of Substances," "The Divine Knowledge is the Substance

of being in all things. God is the all in all, the one Light illuminating all; the One Life giving life to all, in many gradations descending from the higher to the lower, and ascending from the lower to the higher; as it is in the Universal, so it is in the individual in the universe."

God and nature is an oft-rehearsed phrase of Bruno. "We study the splendor of Deity and nature; God and nature are one and the same substance, one and the same power, one and the same space, one and the same creating power. Nature is nothing more than God's power which moves matter in the eternal order—the order we call Divine."

In speaking of matter, Bruno teaches the following: "In the Universe are two chief principles, constant and eternal, the principle of substance or matter, and the principle of form. These principles are constant and promise immortality for the body as well as the soul. But all forms which proceed from Substance must return to Substance, so it seems as though

there were in reality nothing constant, but matter has the power to send forms from itself. They are not taken from without, but from its source. All form is nothing else than the indwelling soul in things, which is manifested or brought into appearance. All things have a part of Mind-Substance, or all things are ensouled. Soul is found in all things; there is not the smallest corpuscle, which does not comprise this Soul-Light.

“The world’s soul is the constituting, forming principle of the Universe, its life is in all things, and the soul form in all things; the nature of all matter is pure spirit in action.” If we recall the narrow world-picture of Bruno’s day, we shall realize what an immense service was done by him. He was afraid of no consequences. Pope and Church got along fairly well with Copernicus’ system. This astronomer freed the sun for us, and raised our earth into a full swinging globe.

It remained for him to break the still narrow boundaries of the Copernican

world, and give our world its completely immeasurable space. Bruno defended his cosmological teachings with great vigor and courage. The entire world was against him in its thought. Copernicus had taught the Aristotelian Infinity of the world's edifice, by keeping the fixed-star sphere.

Bruno declares, "For us consists the Universal sphere as a single, all over-spreading, infinite, immovable continuum, in which numberless spheres or particular worlds exist. There is but one sky, only one immeasurable world's space, one matrix, one universal connective, one ether region through which the whole moves. In this become visible innumerable stars, constellations, world bodies, and suns, and this gives us a right to reason that there are numberless others. These immeasurable and unnumbered moving bodies are the necessary media, through which the formless glory of God endeavors to manifest itself, in a form, or corporeal manner."

“Of these great constellations our earth is one, yet not a single one is the center, for the universe is in all directions equally immeasurable. For neither the sun nor in the sun, the earth or in the earth, nor in any region is the center of the universe. To every living being the center is the middle round which it revolves, so there are as many centers as worlds swung by their own weight; they move freely in the ether, attracting each other by the mind forces which dwell in each.”

“The earth and all other constellations have their own life principle, which is none other than their own soul, which again is but a part of the World Soul.” This creating World-Soul finds infinite delight in propagating infinitely graded forms of life; the object of these diverse expressions is to delight the mind, and call into manifestation an infinite number of ideas to make true the world of reason. For where there are variety and diversity, there are also gradation, order, system, harmony and concord, and in the har-

mony of the opposites rests the beauty of the whole. Of course there is harmony of parts, only in beholding the whole. Even the thinkable smallest has in the universe the highest destiny; viz., the task of subjugating itself as a part of the whole, that the whole may harmoniously balance and unite. Nothing in the universe is so small that it cannot add something to the keeping and perfecting of the highest. There is no evil for anybody or anything, which is not a good for somebody. To one who always considers the whole, nothing is hideous or evil, nothing inharmonious in its diversity. To see the perfect depends on how well we hold the contrasts in check; nature is like a music master, harmonizing higher and lower tones in a magnificent symphony. The world harmony can never pass away, no more than the **Eternal can perish.**"

It is to Bruno we give credit for having discovered the rotation of the sun on its own axis. He was not afraid to proclaim

that all constellations beyond the orbits of Saturn (Uranus and Neptune not having then been discovered) were suns, each having a separate system. These suns are called fixed stars, because they seem motionless and retain their relative position in the heavens, but in reality they have their motions. In claiming this discovery, Bruno rejoiced greatly, as later in his day the truth was verified by the calculations of astronomers.

In speaking of comets, he claimed they are a special species of planets, differing only from the real planets in that they seldom appear, because their path is in an opposite direction to our vision and the sun. His speculations in astronomy have been more than once verified. Bruno claimed that all the planets of our system were not yet discovered.

Bruno seems to have anticipated "the unit development of all organic beings," or the doctrine of evolution as taught by Darwin.

"Matter is in a constant state of fleet.

No body is to-day what it was yesterday. This motion is nothing more than the outer appearance of the soul in all things. In all things, even the smallest, is an indwelling soul, which gives it power of thinking, and sensation, and the desire to strive and maintain that which is most useful to it and to the whole.” This all-penetrating ensouled intelligence appears in lower organisms as blind or sleeping, next showing more of its natural characteristics—as in the animal. The third step in gradation is seen in the inborn reason, manifesting itself in an organic mould.” All of which seems to point to a scale of evolution in Bruno’s doctrine of development.

Speaking of art, our philosopher returns to Nature, claiming her to be the substance and source of all arts. “Nature herself is a living art, and a living power of the soul. Art is the imitator of Nature; it follows her footprints. The aim of art is to express the beautiful, and the beautiful is seen in the harmony of opposites. If the world of forms were similar,

it would never have been beautiful; it is in the variety that we have beauty. In Nature's contrasts have we action, reaction, motion and differentiation, order, harmony, and beauty, thus pleasing the poet, the philosopher, and the painter.

CHAPTER VIII

POEMS

"In order to contemplate Divine things, the eyes must be opened by means of images, analogies, and fancies."—G. B.

BRUNO makes use of lower things to picture and suggest the higher. His one great object and aim is to get the Truth and see the Light. All trials and sufferings tend to draw the soul upward, and purify the will. The first three poems here given are taken from Frith's translation, which seems less involved than that of other translators. Bruno's peculiar style makes translation one of great difficulty; yet withal, the perusal will repay the careful reader abundantly. One readily sees Bruno to be impulsive, highly imaginative, and never heavy, but always spontaneous.

I

LIFE FOR SONG

Come Muse, O Muse so often scorned by me,
The hope of sorrow and the balm of care,—
Give to me speech and song, that I may be
Unchid by grief; grant me such graces rare
As other ministering souls may never see
Who boast thy laurel, and thy myrtle wear.
I know no joy wherein thou hast not part,
My speeding wind, my anchor, and my goal.
Come, fair Parnassus, lift thou up my heart,
Come, Helicon, renew my thirsty soul,
A cypress crown, O Muse, is thine to give,
And pain eternal; take this weary frame,
Touch me with fire, and this my death shall
live,
On all men's life, and in undying fame.

II

COMPENSATION

The moth beholds not death as forth he flies,
Into the splendor of the living flame;
The hart athirst to crystal water hies,
Nor heeds the shaft, nor fears the hunter's
aim;

The timid bird, returning from above
To join his mate, deems not the net is nigh;
Unto the light, the fount, and to my love,
Seeing the flame, the shaft, the chains, fly;
So high a torch, love-sighted in the skies,
Consumes my soul; and with the bow divine
Of piercing sweetness what terrestrial vies
This net is dear delight doth prison mine.

III

OF IMMENSITY

"Tis thou, O Spirit, dost within my soul
This weakly thought with thine own life amend;
Rejoicing dost thy rapid pinions lend
Me, and dost wing me to that lofty goal
Where secret portals ope and fetters break,
And dost grant me by thy grace complete,
Fortune to spurn, and death; O high retreat,
Which few attain, and fewer yet forsake!
Girdled with gates of brass in every part,
Prisoned and bound in vain, 'tis mine to rise,
Through sparkling fields of air to pierce the
skies,
Sped and accoutered by no doubting heart,
Till, raised on clouds of contemplation vast,
Light, leader, law, Creator, I attain at last.

IV

THE WINGED HEART

(The Soul in search of greater powers.)

My solitary bird! away unto that region,
Which overshadows and which occupies my
thought,
Go swiftly, and there nestle; there every
Need of thine be strengthened,
There all thy industry and art be spent!
There be thou born again, and there on high,
Gather and train up thy wandering fledglings,
Since adverse fate has drawn away the bars,
With which she ever sought to block the way.
Go! I desire for thee a nobler dwelling-place,
And thou shalt have for guide a god,
Who is called blind by him who nothing sees.
Go! and ever be by thee revered,
Each deity of that wide sphere,
And come not back to me till thou art mine.

In this poem, the progress of the soul is illustrated by a winged heart, which is sent out of the cage in which it lived idle and quiet, to make its nest on high and bring up its fledglings, its thoughts; the

time being come in which those impediments are removed, which were caused externally in a thousand different ways, and internally by natural feebleness. He dismisses his heart then to make more magnificent surroundings, urging him to the highest propositions and intentions, now that those powers of the soul are more fully fledged, which Plato signifies by the two wings, and he commits him to the guidance of that god, who, by the unseeing crowd, is considered insane and blind; that is, Love, who by the mercy and favor of Heaven has power to transform him into that nature toward which he aspires, or into that state from which, a pilgrim, he is banished. Whence he says, "Come not back to me till thou art mine," and not unworthily may I say with that other:

Thou hast left me, oh, my heart,
And thou, light of my eyes, art no more with
me.

This describes the death of the soul, which by the Kabbalists is called the death by

kisses, symbolized in the Song of Solomon, where the friend says:

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
For when he wounds me,
I suffer with a cruel love.*

By others it is called sleep; the Psalmist says:

*It shall be, that I give sleep unto mine eyes,
And mine eyelids shall slumber,
And I shall have in him peaceful repose.*

The soul then is said to be faint because it is dead to itself, and alive in the object.

V

THE WILL

The captain calls his warriors to arms,
And at the trumpet's sound they all
Under one sign and standard come;
But yet for some in vain the call is heard,
Heedless and unprepared, they mind it not.
One foe he kills, and the insane unborn,
He banishes from out the camp in scorn.

And thus the soul, when foiled her high designs,
Would have all those opponents dead or gone;
One object only I regard,
One face alone my mind does fill,
One beauty keeps me fixed and still;
One arrow pierced my heart, and one
The fire with which alone I burn,
And toward one Paradise I turn.

The captain here is the human will, which dwells in the depths of the soul with the small helm of reason to govern and guide the interior powers against the wave of natural impulses. He, with the sound of the trumpet—that is, by fixed resolve—calls all the warriors or invokes all the powers; called warriors because they are in continual strife and opposition; and their affections, which are all contrary thoughts, some toward one and some toward the other side inclining, and he tries to bring them all under one flag—one settled end and aim. Some are called in vain to put in a ready appearance, and are chiefly those which proceed from the lower instincts, and which obey the reason

either not at all, or very little; and forcing himself to prevent their actions and condemn those which cannot be prevented, he shows himself as one who would kill those and banish these, now by the scourge of scorn, now by the sword of anger. One only is the object of his regards, and on this he is intently fixed; one prospect delights and fills his imagination, one beauty pleases, and he rests in that, because the operation of the intelligence is not a work of movement but of quiet; from thence alone he derives that barb which, killing him, constitutes the consummation of perfection. He burns with one fire alone; that is, one affection consumes him. He knows one Paradise,—that is, one consummation, because Paradise commonly signifies the end; which is again distinguished from that which is absolute in truth and essence from that which is so in appearance and shadow or form. Of the first there can be only one, as there can be only one ultimate and one primal good. Of the second the modes are infinite.

VI

THE SOUL—THE DIVINE HERO

Although to many pains thou dost subject me,
Yet do I thank thee, love, and owe thee much,
That thou my breast dost cleave with noble
wound,

And then dost take my heart and master it.

Thus true it is, that I, on earth, adore
A living object, image most beautiful of God,
Let him who will think that my fate is bad,
That kills in hope and quickens in desire.

My pasture is the high emprise,
And though the end desired be not attained,
And though my soul in many thoughts is spent,
Enough that she enkindles noble fire,
Enough that she has lifted me on high,
And from ignoble crowd has severed me.

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